



Leicestershire  
County Council

# Adults and Communities Department Local Account

Our Performance

1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014



# Introduction

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We are pleased to introduce *Our Performance*. This is our Local Account 2013-14 and it sets out our achievements over the last year, our services and on-going priorities and challenges for the year ahead. Through this document we want to tell the citizens of Leicestershire how well the Adults and Communities department met the needs of local people during 2012-13 and to encourage customer interest and feedback.

The Adults and Communities department provides support, activities, cultural and learning opportunities across the whole community. There has been an increasing focus on supporting the health and wellbeing of Leicestershire's population. Our services are working hard to support people with high level social care needs, as well as focussing on preventative support, by helping them to maintain and regain their independence. This may be through services that are provided after an assessment, short-term support to help someone after an illness, or cultural or learning services available to all.



The department faces some challenging times and it is therefore useful for us to reflect on these which include:

- In February 2014 the Council announced its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2014/15 to 2017/18 which set savings targets for the Council of £110m, £21m of which is to come from the Adults and Communities department. Although the Better Care Fund is contributing significantly towards meeting this target (£10m), it is nevertheless a considerable financial challenge to meet. In September 2014 the Cabinet provided an update of the MTFS, announcing that additional savings and austerity budgets were likely to be needed until at least 2018/19. This is likely to mean further savings for the Adults and Communities department over the next few years.
- The Care Act 2014 consolidates over sixty years of social care legislation and reforms the way that care is funded. The Act means many challenges for the department and changes to the way that it works but it is also an opportunity to rethink the way that we work and how we support vulnerable people.
- The department is a key contributor of the Better Care Together programme. This means working together with health and social care services across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) to provide integrated, high-quality services, delivered in local community settings where appropriate whilst also improving emergency and acute care.
- The Council is reviewing how it can bring public services together, placing the customer and service user at the heart of service design. This approach will be delivered by a cross-party Transformation Board tasked with developing innovative solutions which deliver the Council's key priorities and the department has a role to play in this process of change.

Against this backdrop of change, we can report on improvements in the provision of support and care offered by the department. We know, for example, that the number of people who receive social care from the department and feel that they have control over their everyday life has increased for the third year in a row. The quality of life for people in receipt of social care has also continued to improve.

However, and in contrast, the percentage of people who are satisfied with their care and support has decreased since 2012/13 and this is a concern. Likewise, the proportion of service users who find it easy to find the information that they need has decreased. It is therefore clear that we need to understand better why people are not happy with the support that they receive and why it is difficult to get the right information.

Because our Carers Survey is only carried out every two years, we have no up-to-date information about carers quality of life or the number of carers satisfied with our services. However, during 2013-14, a major review has taken place of the department's carer support services with the aim of improving our offer to carers in accordance with the Care Act and we hope to be able to start seeing the impact of these changes in future Carers Surveys.

We are working towards a partnership approach to *Our Performance* by asking citizens and people who have used social care services for their views on how we think we have done, as well as your feedback on the content and presentation of this report. We will work with Healthwatch to promote customer interest and feedback on the report. We hope that you find this years' *Our Performance* informative and we value your feedback.



Mick Connell  
Director  
Adults and Communities



Dave Houseman MBE CC  
Cabinet Lead Member  
Adult Social Care

# Our Performance - The Local Account 2013-14

## Leicestershire and the Adults and Communities Department

The Adults and Communities department provides services for all adults (people aged 18 years and above) in Leicestershire (excluding Leicester City). The 2011 Census recorded that the total population living in the County was 650,500 and it has been estimated that this has risen by 2.2% to 665,100 people in 2014. Of these, it has been estimated that 530,400 people were aged 18 or over, and 130,400 people were aged 65 and over (19.6% of the total population of the county)<sup>1</sup>.

The department offers a a range of services and support. This ranges from social care services which support vulnerable people through to high quality cultural and learning activities and opportunities. The department is therefore arranged into two distinct but connected parts: 'Adult Social Care' and 'Communities and Wellbeing'.

Adult Social Care services provide advice and information, assessment and support for who need social care. This includes guidance for people who are able to fund their own care through the provision of information and advice through to direct services for people who are eligible for ongoing support. These services are either provided directly by the Department (known as 'in-house provision') or are purchased from the independent sector ('commissioned services'). A total of 15,949 people accessed social care services in the county during 2013-14. Many of our customers now purchase and arrange their own support by using a personal budget. This has enabled people to take control and choose the right kinds of support for them.

Communities and Wellbeing services include learning and volunteering activities, the provision of local libraries, cultural and arts services; many of these sit at the heart of our local communities. The relationship between Communities and Wellbeing and Adult Social Care is a key strength of the department and is a factor that allows us to improve our offer to the people of Leicestershire through the provision of personalised support.

During 2013/14 the Department spent £137.5 million on Adult Social Care and Communities and Wellbeing services. This money was spent in the following ways:

	£m
Residential and Nursing Care	52.6
Supported Living	14.1
Community Support (Direct Payments; Homecare; Meals and Day Services)	45.5
Reablement	4.1
Housing Related Support and Voluntary Sector Grants	7.4
Assistive Technology, Equipment, Aids and Adapataions	3.1
Social Work Teams	11.0
Support Services	7.8
Communties and Wellbeing	5.9
Health Investments (balance not allocated above)	-14.1

<sup>1</sup>Data derived from Office of National Statistics (ONS), PANSI ([www.pansi.org.uk](http://www.pansi.org.uk)), and POPPI ([www.poppi.org.uk](http://www.poppi.org.uk))

# How we have produced *Our Performance 2013-14*

This report has been structured around the Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF). The ASCOF is a national framework written by the Department of Health. It is the main tool for measuring the progress of the Adult Social Care system in England and helps us to understand the experiences of people who use care and support.

We have decided to structure this report around the four main areas (known as 'domains') covered in the ASCOF. These are:

1. Enhancing quality of life for people with care and support needs
2. Delaying and reducing the need for care and support
3. Ensuring people have a positive experience of care and support
4. Safeguarding people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and protecting them from avoidable harm.

## Adults and Communities Business Plan, 2013-2014

**The Adults and Communities Department produces an annual business plan. The Business Plan, 2013-14 contains six strategic aims, which are as follows:**

- Ensure that you have the right information available at the right time in the right ways you can make informed choices about your future
- Make it as easy as possible for you to access our support and the services we supply
- Continue our journey of transformation towards personalised support where people are in control of the support they receive
- Use our resources wisely to ensure we can maintain quality effective services within available resources
- Shift more of our investment from traditional services to services that promote independence and support communities to find solutions for themselves
- Work closer with our partners, customers and communities to plan and deliver our services.

**Under these key strategic aims we have a number of Departmental priorities:**

- Developing our information and advice customer offers
- Working closer with our communities
- Continue to enable the provision of modern accessible Cultural and Adult Learning services
- Increasing choice for our customers
- Improving our customer experiences and maintaining quality services
- Making the best use of our available resources to meet the needs of a growing population
- Working in communities and out partners to promote community solutions
- Working together to deliver our joint plans
- Ensure we have a competent and trained workforce both in the services we provide and those we commission.

# How are we performing?

## 1. Enhancing quality of life for people with care and support needs

When we talk about ‘quality of life’ for people with social care and support needs, we consider how people feel about:

- Control over their everyday lives
- Personal cleanliness and comfort
- Food and drink
- Personal safety
- Being able to socialise
- Having things to do – this might be having a paid job, volunteering, caring or doing hobbies
- Cleanliness and comfort of the person’s home
- Dignity – the way that the person feels about having social care and support

One of the ways the department can find out about quality of life is by looking at responses to the Adult Social Care Survey which is carried out annually across England and involves sending questionnaires to people who use our services.

The survey found that 75% of people in Leicestershire in receipt of social care and support felt that they had control over their daily life, which represents an on-going improvement (from 74.4% in 2012/13 and 66.1% in 2011/12).

Another way the department is able to consider the quality of people’s lives is to look at how many people use a Personal Budget. A Personal Budget (sometimes referred to as Direct Payments) is a way that people can receive money to pay for their care and support of their choosing. This means that they have more choice over the type of support they get and who provides it. With a Personal Budget, social care customers can choose to buy their own services, or they can ask the Council to support them to buy those services.

In 2013/14, 51.3% of social care customers, including carers, were using a Personal Budget. This represents only a slight increase from 2012/13, when 50.5% were in receipt of a Personal Budget. However, this figure is below the national average and the department needs to consider ways to improve in this area. Of those customers using a Personal Budget in 2013/14, 14.8% received it as a cash payment. This is also below the national average and a reduction on the proportion receiving a cash payment in 2012/13. It is therefore another area the department needs to look to improve.

### Carers

The Care Act 2014 means that for the first time unpaid carers will be put on a par with those that they care for and will have the right to ask for an assessment of their support needs. The department is therefore looking at its

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of people in Leicestershire in receipt of social care and support felt that they had control over their daily life



responsibilities with regard to carers and in 2013/14 a review of the department's carers support services was undertaken, including a phase of public consultation, and this has resulted in a number of new commissioning options being proposed. These new services have been developed to provide services and support that meet demand, have a focus on positive outcomes for carers and customers, give value for money, and ensure that the Council complies with the Care Act 2014.

### **People with Learning Disabilities**

The percentage of people with learning disabilities known to the department and who are in employment rose from 1.6% to 2.5% in 2013/14, but this remains below the national average. Also below the national average was the number of people with a learning disability known to the Council in settled accommodation (settled accommodation means not residential or nursing care and a person's permanent home). The department is continuing to look at ways of improving performance in these areas through initiatives such as our Supported Living Project (where people live in their own homes with some support, with daily activities) and there are specific actions around housing for people with a learning disability in the department's Winterbourne Action Plan.

### **Other activities**

The department has also undertaken a number of other activities during 2013-14 to enhance the quality of life of people with care and support needs. These include:

- Ongoing reviews of community opportunities in the Hinckley and Melton areas which have resulted in a large number of service users accessing alternative services (including community-based services). This work has shown many positive outcomes for individuals.
- Delivery of 'Wellbeing Hi-5' events, offering a range of health and creative activities in a variety of community and cultural venues. Over 200 events were included on the programme for 2013 and over 2,000 people engaged with the events, either as participants or audience members.
- Ongoing delivery of the Leicestershire Adult Learning Service (LALS), providing a range of learning opportunities in community and learning venues. Notable is a course specifically for individuals with learning disabilities designed to lead to a range of outcomes including community involvement, employment and volunteering, and personal development.
- Expansion of the department's 'Shared Lives' service. This service is based on individuals and families in local communities providing accommodation and/or support for people who need some help to live the lives that they choose. The service now includes a greater number of placements and there has been a notable increase in the number of adults with mental health problems accessing the service.
- Continued support of the 'ChooseMySupport' website (run in partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Council). The website currently has over 300 approved providers offering in excess of 1,500 individual services and has 719 registered users (including individuals, brokers and carers).



**These achievements are consistent with, and demonstrate progress towards the strategic aims and priorities set out in the Adults and Communities Business Plan, 2013-14, including:**

- Ensure that you have the right information available at the right time in the right ways you can make informed choices about your future
- Make it as easy as possible for you to access our support and the services we supply
- Continue our journey of transformation towards personalised support where people are in control of the support they receive
- Shift more of our investment from traditional services to services that promoting dependence and support communities to find solutions for themselves
- Making the best use of our available resources to meet the needs of a growing population
- Improving our customer experiences and maintaining quality services
- Working closer with our communities
- Continue to enable the provision of modern accessible Cultural and Adult Learning services
- Increasing choice for our customers

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51.3%

of social care customers, are using a Personal Budget



We need to improve our performance in this area



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## 2. Delaying and reducing the need for care and support

We want to support people to be as independent and healthy, for as long as possible and practicable. We measure how well we are doing by looking at a number of different areas:

### Residential Care and Re-ablement

In Leicestershire in 2013-14 there were 12 admissions to residential and nursing care per 100,000 of the 18-64 population. There were also 756.2 admissions to residential and nursing care per 100,000 of the population for adults aged over 64. This means that our performance is above the national average for people aged 18-64 years but below the national average for those aged 65 and over.

Re-ablement is support provided to someone in their own home that helps them to get back on their feet and be independent. This might be after a period of illness or a stay in hospital.

Leicestershire's re-ablement service is called the Homecare Assessment and Re-ablement Team (HART) and has had another successful year. HART work with people for up to six weeks after a period of illness or disability with a focus on supporting their independence and enabling them to continue living in their own home. Between 2012/13 and 2013/14 the number of people that HART worked with increased by 9%. The proportion of people getting services from HART who needed no

further support at the end of the service increased from 45% in 2012/13 to 51% in 2013/14.

There have also been efforts to improve joined up working with health to re-focus the use of HART for people coming out of hospital. Customer engagement with people in January 2013 resulted in many positive comments about the service. 78.6% of older people who were discharged from hospital and accessed re-ablement services were still at home 91 days after discharge. This is the same proportion of people as in 2012/13 and performance in this area remains below the national average. We are therefore looking at ways to improve this such as the department's Hospital2Home' service which provide support to individuals being discharged from hospital but who are not supported by unpaid carers (e.g. family or friends).

### Other activities

The department has also undertaken a number of other activities or initiatives during 2013-14 in order to enhance the delaying and reducing the need for care and support. These include:

- The department has supported the national Public Library health offer, including the 'Books on Prescription' scheme which offers a self-help resources through libraries for people with low to moderate mental health issues.
- In 2013/14 Leicestershire's Assistive Technology Team supported 1,600 people with monitored technologies in their homes, such as community alarms linked to falls detection, environmental sensors (smoke, temperature, carbon monoxide and flood) and property sensors. In addition to this, 1,400 people were supported with stand-alone technologies ranging from memory communication aids to environmental controls.
- The Crisis Response Service (CRS) pilot began in September 2013. It involves adult social care services working to support people who are experiencing a health or social care crisis within their own home and without which they may be admitted to hospital or a care home. This is done together with NHS colleagues and takes referrals from a range of professionals,

including A&E, GPs, Community Services, Social Care teams and the Emergency Duty Team. Between September 2013 and February 2014, the CRS has helped 183 service users avoid a hospital admission and 91 service users avoid a residential admission.

- A review of prevention services commenced in 2013 and findings went out to public consultation in April 2014 (the conclusion of the review is therefore outside the scope of this report). The prevention review aimed to focus on those most likely to need health and social care support in the future. The Medium Term Financial Strategy set a savings target of £3.5 million to be made against prevention services (covering a range of housing-related support and voluntary sector contracts) and the review therefore sort to develop a new prevention offer for the Department whilst also achieving these savings. As the Better Care Fund is further developed the departmental offer will become aligned with a wider Unified Prevention Offer for Leicestershire, alongside key partners.
- The First Contact scheme is available to all adults aged 18 and over. It is a partnership of service providers who work together in a co-ordinated way to ensure vulnerable people are able to access the right support and information to help them stay independent. During 2013/14, the scheme received 2,647 completed checklists resulting in 8,160 referrals to partner organisations for low-level preventative support. This represents a 40% increase on referrals in and out of the service compared with 2012/13. There is also now an agreement with the East and West Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to roll out the First Contact scheme across all GP practices in the County during 2014/15.
- Timebanking is a way of swapping skills, to earn credits which you then spend on yourself. For every hour participants deposit in a Timebank, perhaps by giving practical help and support to others, they are able to withdraw equivalent support in time when they themselves are in need. In each case, the participant decides what they can offer. Timebanking is seen as important element in enabling people to be better

supported within their own communities and the initial pilot scheme has come to an end during 2013/14 and new funding is in place to support the scheme into the future as part of the department's prevention offer.

**These achievements are consistent with, and demonstrate progress towards the strategic aims and priorities set out in the Adults and Communities Business Plan, 2013-14, including:**

- Use our resources wisely to ensure we can maintain quality effective services within available resources.
- Shift more of our investment from traditional services to services that promote independence and support communities to find solutions for themselves.
- Work closer with our partners, customers and communities to plan and deliver our services.
- Working closer with our communities
- Making the best use of our available resources to meet the needs of a growing population
- Working in communities and out partners to promote community solutions



We are performing well in this area



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### 3. Ensuring people have a positive experience of care and support

A priority for the department is ensuring that people receive good care and support. We get a good understanding of how well we are doing from the responses in the Adult Social Care Survey for 2013/14.

The percentage of people in receipt of social care who were satisfied with their care and support fell to 60.1% in 2013/14 (having been 67.9% in 2012/13). This figure means that we are performing well below the national average. Likewise, the number of service users who found it easy to find information also fell, from 70.3% in 2012/13 to 68.0% in 2013/14. These are areas that the department needs to consider in more detail and establish how we can make improvements.

#### Customer Service Centre

The Council's Customer Service Centre (CSC) acts as a first point of contact for adult social care contacts. During 2013/14, the CSC dealt with over 100,000 in bound calls (20% of which came via a separate hospital line), 15,000 emails, 2,000 letters and 1,500 referrals from the First Contact scheme. The CSC also made over 250,000 outbound calls, mainly related to enquiries or cases that could not be concluded at the first point of contact.

Between March and May 2013, the CSC commissioned an independent satisfaction survey of 600 customers, looking at a range of satisfaction measures following contact with the CSC. The survey found that 80% of

customers were quite or very satisfied, whilst a further 10% said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. A high proportion of customers also felt satisfied with the quality and clarity of information received during contact with the CSC.

#### Other activities

The department has undertaken a number of activities or initiatives during 2013-14 in order to ensure people have a positive experience of care and support in 2013/14, include:

- Working with the NHS, the Better Care Fund plan has been written to explain how the department will work together to improve health, care and support services. This aims to provide support closer to home and minimise the time people spend in hospital.
- The department has commissioned an Advice service, awarded to a local voluntary sector organisation to deliver advice about social care to adults with the aim of supporting people to make informed choices about support and services.
- The department regularly monitors its commissioned services and there is a well-established approach to contract monitoring of services undertaken by Compliance Officers. In addition, the department's Quality Improvement Team (QIT) continues to work with health and other partners to improve the standard of care in residential and nursing homes. In 2013/14, QIT received 29 new referrals. Of these, 56% of providers were supported to be contractually compliant within 3 months whilst a further 28% were compliant within 6 months and 15.6% compliant within 9 months.

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- Ensure that you have the right information available at the right time in the right ways you can make informed choices about your future.
- Make it as easy as possible for you to access our support and the services we supply.
- Work closer with our partners, customers and communities to plan and deliver our services.
- Developing our information and advice customer offers
- Continue to enable the provision of modern accessible Cultural and Adult Learning services
- Improving our customer experiences and maintaining quality services
- Making the best use of our available resources to meet the needs of a growing population
- Working together to deliver our joint plans



of customers were quite or very satisfied with the customer service centre



We need to improve our performance in this area



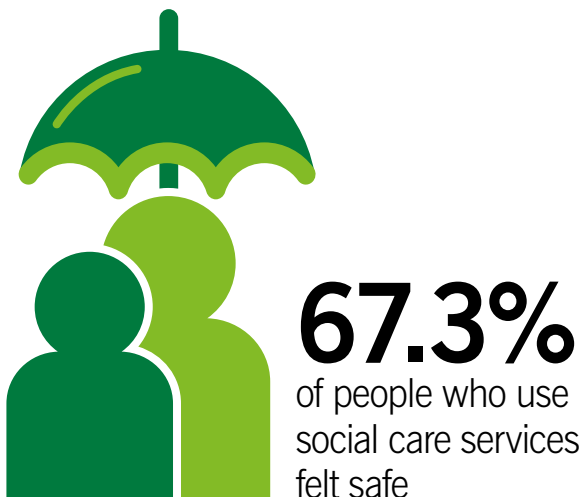
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#### 4. Safeguarding people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and protecting them from avoidable harm

Keeping vulnerable people safe is one of the department's most important priorities and is proud of its partnership arrangements in respect of safeguarding. The department continues to develop multi-agency and joint working arrangements in this area and supports the Safeguarding Adults Board which provides effective governance, produces an annual report and communicates key information including learning from serious case reviews. The Safeguarding Adults Board also works closely with the local Safeguarding Children's Board to ensure closer working and better outcomes for child, young person and adult service users.

The Adult Social Care Survey shows that in 2013/14, 67.3% of people who use social care services felt safe. This represents an increase from the previous two years but is still below the national average. However, and in contrast, the proportion of people who felt that the services they used made them feel safe was 90.4% - again, showing an increase on previous years and above the national average in this area. This suggests that whilst service users may not generally feel safe, the social care services they receive from the Department do help them to feel safer.



During 2013/14 a total of 1,361 safeguarding referrals were made to the department. Of these, 988 referrals were for people already known to the department (e.g. existing service users) whilst the remainder (373 people) were previously unknown to the department.

### Other activities

Other activities that the Adults and Communities department have undertaken to safeguard people whose circumstances make them vulnerable and protecting them from avoidable harm in 2013/14 include:

- The department's safeguarding team continues to investigate allegations and safeguarding referrals from people living in residential and nursing homes. The team, which comprises qualified social workers, community care workers and an occupational therapist, have developed a consistent approach and clear working practices within the residential and nursing care sector and work closely with other teams within the department, such as the Quality Improvement Team (QIT), Deprivation of Liberties (DOLs) team and Compliance Officers.
- The Home Safety Action Group (HSAG), which includes representatives from the department, other statutory bodies and the voluntary sector, continues its work to promote safer communities and safeguarding vulnerable people. In 2013/14 the group worked to improve health and wellbeing with a focus on prevention services, including specialist work around people with dementia.
- The department has developed a strong relationship with the Community Safety Team which forms part of the Council's Chief Executives department. This has included representatives from the department sitting on a Hate Incident Reduction and Monitoring Steering group, the use of libraries as reporting centres for hate incidents (backed-up with appropriate training for library staff), and the roll-out of training about community safety to all Adults and Communities staff.

### These achievements are consistent with, and demonstrate progress towards the strategic aims and priorities set out in the Adults and Communities Business Plan, 2013-14, including:

- Shift more of our investment from traditional services to services that promote independence and support communities to find solutions for themselves.
- Work closer with our partners, customers and communities to plan and deliver our services.
- Working closer with our communities
- Working in communities and out partners to promote community solutions
- Working together to deliver our joint plans
- Ensure we have a competent and trained workforce both in the services we provide and those we commission.



We are performing well in this area



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# Effective and Efficient Management of Resources and Workplace Development

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Public services are provided in the most efficient and effective way – this relies on partnership working. Benefits of this approach include the potential for joined up effort and reducing areas of duplication and effectively targeting efforts. Our key partners include other departments within the Council, the local Borough and District councils as well as colleagues in health, Public Health and the voluntary sector. The development of the Health and Wellbeing Board has provided a good basis for delivering joined up services and integrated approaches.

The current financial climate, whilst presenting challenges, offers new opportunities to look at different solutions and develop new strategic partnerships. Examples of how this will be delivered in practice include the development of a Unified Prevention Board, active involvement of staff in the Council's Transformation programme, strengthening

the approach to transitions with children's services and the NHS, and the development of the Better Care Fund Plan.

The department is supported by a new Director of Health Care Integration. The role was created in recognition of the requirements of the Better Care Fund (BCF) and the move towards integration between adult social care and health.

Efficient and effective workplace planning – supporting and developing an effective workforce, both internally and externally, is important in delivering a sustainable social care market. The Department continues to support workforce development through the Personal Development Review (PDR) process.

Professional leadership is offered to social workers and the department is actively supporting their professional development through an action plan following the Social Work Health Check. These changes have resulted in increased support and development opportunities to social workers across the Council.



# Customer Engagement in 2013/14


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The Adults and Communities department understands and values the importance of listening to citizens. This is critical to understanding people's needs and aspirations and what they think about the quality and effectiveness of services and, in this way, the department can make sure that it is meeting the needs of the people of Leicestershire. This process is known as 'customer engagement' and the department has an 'Engagement Framework' which includes a set of principles that we should follow when trying to obtain people's views and thoughts.

The department currently commissions a provider, 'Communities in Partnership' (CIP), to help us with engagement activity. This helps to ensure that all engagement is inclusive, and that people are supported to share their views.

This section includes some information about what customers and the public have said between April 2013 and March 2014:

- There were a series of engagement events with families, professionals and young people to continue to inform our Transitions strategy and action plan. Strong and sustainable links have been developed with the special school student councils and parent partnership forum to support the delivery.
- As part of the strategic review of adult preventative mental health services the Department commissioned SUCRAN (Service User and Carer Audit Network) to undertake research with current service users accessing mental health services. This engagement work was followed by further consultation with providers, stakeholders, the general public as well as further targeted engagement with current service users. This ensured that the review of these services took into account the views of a wide range of people.
- The recent Prevention review included a wide range of consultation activities ranging from workshops with the public and providers to assist in the development of a new Prevention Model which has informed commissioning proposals.



Engagement Framework' includes a set of principles that we should follow when trying to obtain people's views and thoughts

# Healthwatch Leicestershire

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The department has continued to develop its relationship with Healthwatch Leicestershire (who replaced Leicestershire LINK), formalised in a protocol. As a result, during 2013 Healthwatch have added valuable input into the department's Annual Business plan. Healthwatch are the local consumer champion for health and social care and make sure that the views of the public and people who use services are taken into account.

The department recognises that Leicestershire Healthwatch are a key partner and have worked closely with them over the last year in order to engage with our customers in the following ways:

- Quarterly meetings – where members of the public can submit their questions directly to the Director of Adults and Communities
- Social Care Task Group and Carers Task Group – working in partnership to find solutions to issues identified by members of the public
- Engagement events across the County – Healthwatch have been informed of all consultation events held by the department and have conducted engagement activities to identify key priorities from a customer perspective.



**healthwatch**  
Leicestershire

# Complaints and Commendations



The Adults and Communities department have a complaints and commendation procedure which provides guidance for customers about what to expect when making a complaint. The department uses complaints and commendations as a way of identifying and understanding our customer's perspectives about things that are working well and things that we need to improve and change.

In 2013/14 the department received 154 complaints from customers, which is an 11% increase from the previous year (2012/13 – when 139 complaints were received). This is thought to relate partly to better efforts to record complaints and making it easier for people to complain. This will need to be monitored in 2014/15, particularly as financial pressures mean further cuts to social care services. Of the 154 complaints received, 27% were upheld, 25% partly upheld and 39% not upheld. A further 9% were either withdrawn or outside the scope of the Department to deal with (known as 'outside of jurisdiction').

The highest area of complaint is associated with Community Care Finance (accounting for 25% of all complaints received by the department). In addition, thirteen joint complaints were made, complaining about both health and social care services. This type of joint complaint is likely to increase as health and social care services work closer together and it will be important to make sure that joint working arrangements around complaints can address issues raised about health and social care.

In terms of the specific nature of complaints, 22% of complaints (34 complaints) were received about the accuracy and clarity of information, whilst a further 20% concerned the quality of work (32 complaints). Other concerns were raised about professional judgment, delays in providing support, keeping people updated and collaborative working. This feedback, although negative, provides the department with an opportunity to review its working practices and to make improvements. Specific actions as a result of complaints received include:

- Direct staff supervision to address performance or procedural concerns and a reminder to all staff to deliver the outcome of assessments in order to provide an opportunity for the outcomes to be discussed
- Implementation of an auto-acknowledgement system within Community Care Finance to give confidence that referrals have been received.
- Review of letter templates used by the Department to ensure that they are clear, concise and fit for purpose
- Training to staff around support available to carers.

Statutory guidance tells us that we should try and respond to complaints within ten days. In 2013/14, 69% of complaints were responded to within 10 days and 89% of complaints were responded to within 20 days. We are responding to slightly more complaints within 10 days than in 2012/13.



Two hundred and sixty compliments were received in 2013/14 which is a 47% increase in the number of complaints as compared to 2012/13. This is encouraging news. The Homecare Assessment and Re-ablement Team (HART) are responsible for a large number of compliments, with 149 being made during 2013/14.

### **Things that we are doing well:**

- Provision of correct equipment and adaptations and aides to customers
- Treating customers with dignity and respect
- Strong performance in terms of response times to complaints
- The continued relatively low numbers of complaints being escalated to the Ombudsman (with no findings of maladministration being found)

### **Things that we need to improve:**

- Continuing to ensure that the complaints procedure is accessible and advocacy arrangements are in place and used appropriately
- Continuing to improve the process where complaints relate to both health and social care (The Joints Complaints Protocol)
- Production of a Customer Feedback Framework setting out the principles for all Departments across the Council to adopt
- Ensuring that all new managers are aware of the statutory complaints procedure and the support and guidance available to them
- Address issues being raised around invoicing for care and support. The introduction of a new Integrated Adult System (IAS) for recording information about customers, including financial information, should help address some of these issues.

## Our Performance – Please give us your feedback!

We are working towards a partnership approach to *Our Performance* by asking citizens and people who use social care services, your views on how we think we have performed, as well as your feedback on the content and presentation of *Our Performance*. We have worked with Leicestershire Healthwatch to develop this year's *Our Performance* and will continue to work with them to promote customer interest and feedback on the report. We hope that you find this years' Our Performance informative and we would like to hear your views.

[Weblink to report](#)

[Weblink to how to respond](#)